

May-June 2015

Features

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Coordinator's Comments



Abby Dodge

It's hard to believe that we are already into May. Since we are almost to the halfway point, now is a good time to think about completing your 12 hours of training required for the year. In 2014, we reached 61% compliance with that requirement. The good news is that we are already at 54% for 2015! Great job! I really think we can reach at least 90% compliance this year.

The following CASAs have completed at least 12 hours of training to date for 2015:

Mary Blanchard
Zanetta Boughan
Cathy Carter
Chris Charles-Hall
Tracy Diaz
Bud Dragoo
Jan Dragoo
Mary Kay Holcomb
Ned Letto
Darcy Markee
Krista Ochs
Susan Struck

Since it is still early enough in the year for the rest of you to catch up on your training, I will not call you out by name if you haven't completed your training yet. However, don't be surprised if I do that closer to October.

If anyone needs any suggestions on training opportunities, please let me know. CASA makes it easy to achieve training hours – we give credit for so many different things! For example, we award you training credit for simply reading the newsletter (1/2 hour for

each month). I try to provide notice of training opportunities throughout the community, and you can always complete online training modules at the state CASA website (www.azcourts.gov). Here are some of the other things you can do for training credit: read a book that is related to child welfare or advocacy (1 hour for each 100 pages), attend a support group meeting, or watch a video/DVD related to child welfare or advocacy. The National CASA website (www.casaforchildren.org) has an extensive Book List and Film List if you need ideas of what to read or watch.

The issue that I'm currently seeing with training is that those of you who are on inactive status are not completing any training. Or if you are completing training, you are not notifying me of it. Even if you are not actively assigned to a case, or you are formally placed on inactive status, the 12-hour training requirement still exists.

Again, thank you all for working so diligently to meet the training requirement for this year. I am confident that we can reach 90% compliance this year!

MAY 2015						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Mother's Day	11 Eat what you want Day	12	13	14 Manny: Court Report for G Case	15 Cathy: Court Report due for F Case	16 Wear Purple for Peace Day
17	18 Lynn V. 	19 Patti: Court Report due for CS	20 Pick Strawberries	21	22 Mary B. 	23 Lucky Penny Day
24 Juanita A. 	25 Memorial Day	26	27	28 Patti: Court Report Due for SA	29	30 Water a Flower Day
31 World No Tobacco Day						

Created by Lissete Borbon, CASA Support

JUNE 2015						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Dare Day	2	3	4 Applesauce Cake Day	5	6
7 National Ice Cream Date	8	9	10	11	12	13 LuRue T.  TRAINING!! ↓
14 Flag Day	15	16	17 Eat Your Vegetables Day	18 Juanita: Court Report due for AM.	19	20 Melissa B. 
21 Father's Day	22	23	24 Chris: Court Report due for GM.	25	26 Forgiveness Day	27 Sunglasses Day
28	29 Susan: Court Report due for Y Case.	30 Meteor Day	→ 6/13/15 Save the Date for training on Adverse Childhood Experiences/Mental Health First Aid Time TBD (Appropriate meals/snacks will be provided depending on time/length of training) At SV Conference Room (Across from SVJPO) RSVP By May 29 th . More information to follow.			

Created by Lissete Borbon, CASA Support

Au Revoir, Joan

Master Encourager

I have many fond memories of Joan, and she will always be a very special person in my life.

When she started Beyond the Basics to help new CASA volunteers to pull together what they had learned at basic training, this was a real breakthrough. Up until that time, we went through a long period of trial and error before we felt confident and competent.

I was invited to join one of the Beyond the Basics classes to assist Joan in teaching the classes. I learned as much as the CASAs who were taking this training. Joan has a wonderful ability to inspire people, and the atmosphere was such that the class really bonded and decided to form a support group when training ended. Joan encouraged this and asked me and Patti Hager to work with the support group. This was the first support group.

She helped us organize and gave us some pointers and continued to give input when we had questions. The members in the support group were very interested in the foster care system. One had been a foster child and another had been a foster mother. Finally, the group decided they wanted to be in charge of a training class on the foster care system. Joan approved and helped us organize. We contacted Catholic Community Services and the director agreed to come and speak. The CASA who had been a foster child told her story. I still get chills of emotion when I remember her sharing her experiences in foster homes, her feelings about being separated from her siblings, and her determination to build a productive life for herself.

It was a fantastic training and the first time a group of CASAs had ever gotten together to put on a training. Several individual CASAs have headed up training sessions, but these



brand new CASAs were unique because they came up with the idea of having a training as a result of bonding in Beyond the Basics and then in the support group. Joan was the cheerleader of it all. She never, ever doubted that her CASAs (brand new or not) could pull off whatever they decided to undertake.

Thank you, Joan, for helping all of us grow and for picking us up when we fell down (I have been flat on my derriere a number of times) and encouraging us to rededicate ourselves to our kids, not to give up, and to be committed to making a difference in the life of a child.

Mary C. Blanchard



Hi Joan! We go back a couple of years and I must say that the time has been interesting, rewarding and hopefully of benefit to the children we have served. On a personal level, I want to remind you of the evaluation we did together at Buena. You don't know this, you may not even remember, but you are the first person with whom I shared very personal information. You do know I am a private person, and for me to trust someone with my info is a big deal. You listened, and I unloaded. What you don't know is how much that meeting meant to me.....for real.

Thank you, Joan, for that little meeting. Know that you mean a bunch to a lot of people.

patti hager

Joan, you were so fun to work with and I always knew that you were there to help me when I had a problem. Sorry about my Court Reports as I know you would just shake your head when you got one from me. I figure that way you couldn't forget me. Also, loved to see you in person and see your beautiful jewelry. Enjoy your retirement years.

Hugs. Mary Kay Holcomb

 Time to Enjoy

For me, CASA and Joan are synonymous. She came into the program about six months before I began in 2003. How can there be a CASA office without Joan?

Whenever I had challenges that seemed too much to handle (and there were some dandies), Joan always had time to bring things into focus and to put me back onto a productive path. She made the impossible seem doable. Thanks for never giving up on us when we would feel hopeless & helpless!

LuRue Troyer

When I think of Joan I think of her smile. She has such a beautiful smile and can light up a room with it. No matter how crappy your day is, if you see Joan and one of her smiles is directed at you, it becomes a great day.

Besides her smile, I see purple when I think of Joan, whether it is her nails, shoes, clothes, jewelry, cell phone...there is always purple somewhere. and she wears it well.



I thank Joan for her knowledge and guidance to me as a CASA and wish her the best in ALL her future endeavors.

Tracy Diaz





volunteer of the Month!

April 2015

Lynn Vanderdasson

I am pleased to announce the CASA of the Month for April 2015 is Lynn Vanderdasson!

We chose Lynn as CASA of the Month for April due to her continued support for the CASA Program.

Lynn attended and offered to support CASA at our booth at the CPCA Conference on April 9. She further showed her support to the CASA Program by appearing at Coffee with CASA and spreading the word by spending time speaking with two potential applicants.

Lynn was instrumental in bringing back the CASA Support Group meetings. Lynn told me of her desire to see the support group start again, so I told her that she was going to become my go-to person for that. As I'm sure you're all aware, we are having our first meeting of this support group on May 13th at Lynn's house in Hereford.

While supporting the CASA Program in these ways, Lynn also remained active on her case which has recently closed. I look forward to getting Lynn assigned to another child (or children) here in Cochise County.

Articles by Mary C. Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

My First Recruit

In all my 14 years as a CASA volunteer, I have never been able to recruit a single person. This is the first time I have admitted this, and I am able to come clean because last week I was able to let Abby know that a lovely lady is interested in becoming a CASA. I would love to relate all the intricacies of the strategies that I used, but the truth is the lady sought me out and said she is interested in becoming a CASA.

This miraculous experience took place at Berean HS as I was signing in to visit a class. The woman told me she thought what I did was exactly what she would like to do and asked me to tell her about being a CASA volunteer.

Where was my literature, where were my cards, and what should I tell this interested prospective CASA? No problem! When I work with my teenagers, I always encourage them to talk, and usually they do. Adults are a breeze. I asked her what she had heard about CASA, and she told me. I asked her why she was interested in CASA, and she told me she had worked with migrant families and felt it was important to give back to the community. She was working in the school,

so she was comfortable working with young people. She gave me her contact information (I hope I would have remembered to ask for it, but I was so thrilled and excited I had to rely on her good sense to keep the process going).

As soon as I got home I emailed Abby, and she emailed back that she would follow up the very next day. I emailed back and told her I had dibs on being this lovely lady's mentor when she becomes a CASA volunteer.



Tutoring

One of my boys is working on an on-line program for math essentials. Bud Dragoo (he and Jan are co-CASAs on this case) spent considerable quality time walking me through the program. Math is my weakest subject, and my technological skills are sadly deficient. But the Dragoos are going to be traveling for three months, so I simply had to step up to the plate.

I arrived at the group home, countered all the young man's reasons why he wasn't going to do the work, and logged on. Immediately, my young man said he couldn't possibly proceed because he didn't have a calculator. I insisted he find all the problems that didn't require a computer and do them. He did 11 problems and said that was all he could do without a calculator.

I asked him what type of calculator would work. He responded, "Any calculator." I said I would see what I could do. My next stop was the high school for another case. I took time out to talk to his teacher, and the teacher informed me that a calculator was included in the program, but I was welcome to a pink calculator if I thought that would help. Pink! Pink! Pink! I said, "Absolutely!" and went back to the all boys' group home with my pink calculator.

I kept my cool when I asked the young man, "Are you aware that there is a calculator included in the program?" I was interested in hearing his response because this young man really knows his way around computers.

He responded, "No, I didn't know this." I gave him a choice, "Either use the calculator on the program or (I dramatically pulled out the **pink** calculator) use this one." To my surprise

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Articles by Mary C. Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer (Continued)

he took the pink calculator.

Everyone within earshot was hiding a smile at this point. One of the staff volunteered to take over the math duties because I was going to begin working with the young man on his Shakespeare presentation. When I arrived the next day, the staff person told me the young man had done 15 problems and agreed to do fifteen problems every single day.

The next day I came back to begin tutoring on the Shakespeare speech and was told he had been carrying around the pink calculator all day and had been almost willing to do his math assignment.



Giving Back

I am still in contact with a young man I have known for 10 years. He has had his ups and downs along the way, and now he is back in Sierra Vista. He is working over 40 hours a week, he recently got an apartment, which

he was able to furnish, and he is saving for a car. I am soooooo proud of him. He has grown up a great deal over the years, and along the way he has developed a social conscience.

When he moved into his apartment, I went over to ask him for his recommendations on the various apartment complexes in town. He was curious as to why I was asking, so I told him I am still working with teenagers and from time-to-time they move into apartments when they age out and go into the independent living program.

He gave me his recommendations, and we discussed the merits of utilities being included in the lease versus utilities being a tenant's responsibility. We concluded that utilities could become very pricey if the tenant used the air conditioner whenever it was slightly warm and the heat when it became a bit chilly.

During the tour of the apartment, the young man showed off his newly acquired furniture. He told me he had gotten a better bed and was going to get rid of the one he was using. He asked if I knew anyone who might need it.

I told him my case was moving into a studio and didn't have room for a bed and thanked him for his generous thought.

He pondered for a moment and said, "You know, I would be willing to keep an eye on your boys and spend time with them."

I was floored. This young man had not been one who reached out to help others, but he was now willing to help one of my boys. He said, "I think I could help, and I would like to be available if any need advice or a friend."

I was touched and so pleased that one of my former CASA kids wanted to give back to others. I told him this, but I had to tell him that under the rules of our program, we could not do this. I assured him of my gratitude for his offer and told him I was proud that he was willing to reach out and help someone else. He understood and stood a little taller because he had realized that it is important to be willing to make a difference in the life of another person.

An Interview with Brad Thayer

by Mary C. Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

Guidelines for Medications

Brad Thayer is the Behavioral Health Clinical Coordinator for Southeast Region of Arizona. His job is to serve as the bridge between DCS and the behavioral health care system. In this capacity he provides technical support to resolve issues, and he is asked to come in to bring a different perspective when a case gets stuck or contentious.

Brad listed some of behaviors that are commonly diagnosed that are really symptoms of trauma. Medications are often prescribed when children have behavior issues such as:

1. ADHD
2. OD
3. Aggression
4. Depression
5. Bipolar

Brad points out when the child does not respond to medication, it usually means the child does not have that biological disorder but a symptom of trauma. If the child does respond it indicates that

there is some imbalance in the body and that the medication is helping to level out. There is a great deal of guesswork involved in prescribing medications. The psychologist may be in another state with the interview being on Skype with little time spent evaluating the responses of the child, and with much reliance on what is reported by foster parents, teachers, and other people in contact with the child. The diagnosis results in a prescription which is delivered through computer which computes its findings based on diagnosis and not individual needs. Brad is concerned that medications, some of which have potentially serious side effects, may be prescribed by someone who barely knows the child, with the majority of input being from a lay observer.

Brad reports that current research is reporting that trauma is a major factor in all the kids we deal with. Just being removed from family and home is traumatic, not to mention abuse, neglect, and sometimes abandonment. The brain is wired to adapt, and trauma causes the child to learn behaviors that will get his/her needs met. A child who

has been severely abused may react by screaming and pushing away. When the abuse stops, the behavior is still there, even when the attention is loving, and it is extremely frustrating for foster parents and others who work with the child when the child blows up without perceived provocation. Trauma responses are “fight or flight.”

Hyper-reactive = fight
Dissociative = flight

Why is this behavior important? It is important to notice hyper compliant, super quiet behavior. It is a maladaptive behavior that is rooted in trauma. The most extreme example is suicidal tendencies or ideations.

Brad describes clinicians who are not up-to-date on current research about trauma as “looking through their lens and not adding a trauma lens.”

This is not to say medication is not needed for children in DCS custody. Some children may need medication to alleviate some of the severe trauma responses, but the underlining trauma should still be addressed through therapy and other interventions. Use caution when the

~Continued on next page

An Interview with Brad Thayer (Continued)

medication is “working”...is it hiding or masking the behaviors that have not been addressed? This is not for any single person to know, but to ask these questions in the CFT process. Make sure the prescriber is keeping this at the forefront of his/her treatment.

The first responder to the hotline call is DCS. When a child comes into the system, behavioral health services is contacted to set up services. The old mental health system's primary focus was on service delivery...getting services in place.

As the clinical coordinator, Brad's focus is on getting the right services to the right kid in the right amount of time. Brad focuses on the clinical appropriateness of the services, and when he is contacted, he evaluates the situation.

We discussed the question: when is it the appropriate time to contact Brad if services are promised and not delivered? He feels the moment there is a concern that something is not right is the time to contact him. He says a CASA can contact him, but before doing this, the CASA should first voice

his/her concerns to DCS and let Abby know before taking any action. If there is no follow up by DCS or any member of the team and the issue is still not resolved and Abby has been notified, the CASA should then contact Brad.

Email is the best way to contact Brad. His email is BThayer@azdes.gov. If Brad does not respond within 48 hours, he would appreciate a second email to remind him to respond.

Include specifics in the email.

1. Include the child's name.
2. State the specific issues that are a concern and include supporting details.
3. If a sibling group is involved, include specific concerns for each child.

CASAs need to resolve to act if they feel the need to do so and they have followed the appropriate guidelines.

Support Group Meeting

The support group has been reactivated! The six CASAs who attended the May 13th meeting agreed to continue to meet. ***Anyone who could not make this gathering is encouraged to join us for our next one.*** Three of us carpooled, and someone would be happy to give you a ride to the next meeting if you need one.

This is your group. It is designed to help newer CASAs to ask questions about any glitches they may be facing in their cases, and it a golden opportunity for the more experienced volunteers to absorb positive energy from the enthusiasm of the newer CASAs.

When the meeting was over, we all committed to continuing to attend the support group and to help each other to make a difference in the lives of our kids.



Articles on Medication by Mary C. Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

Conversation with a CASA Kid

I find it very useful to discuss important topics with people I trust. As I was working on my interview with Brad Thayer, I decided to ask A.S., one of my CASA kids, to share her opinions on medications. A was willing, and here are her thoughts.

1. Medications should not be prescribed without a full psychological evaluation. A does not feel it enough for a psychologist to review the medical history and prescribe medications.
2. A believes that the seriousness of the disorder must also be considered. Being clinically depressed is not as serious as being manically depressed. If the disorder responds to therapy, then medication may not be needed or a lower dose would be enough. She is not in favor of casual use of "heavy duty medications." If the disorder results in a serotonin imbalance then medication may be necessary.
3. A is not in favor med reviews via webmd.com. She believes that a face-to-face meeting is necessary.
4. She is in favor of using both input from the child and from the foster parent. Her

foster mother is a wonderful person and is exceptionally perceptive, and A feels very comfortable about her ability to accurately describe what is going on with A. This may not always be the case, but the insight of a competent, caring, perceptive foster parent can be a valuable tool in accurately determining if symptoms and behaviors are improving or getting worse when medication dosages are changed.

5. A has been on medications, but she feels she is capable of managing without them now, and she is no longer taking medications.



CASA Awareness of Medications

After interviewing Brad, I realized that I need a systematic action plan for every case in regards to medication. Here is what I intend to do for all my cases.

1. ASAP, I will find out what disorders have been identified for the child. I will

research the disorder. What exactly is ADHD and what are the treatment options?

2. ASAP I will get a complete list of medications prescribed for each disorder along with the dosage and frequency of taking the medication.
3. I will research every medication on the list and find out how it works, its possible side effects, and try to determine if the dosage is high, average or minimal.
4. If there is more than one medication, I will try to find out what happens when they are prescribed together.
5. At the next CFT, I will ask questions, whether I think I understand or not, because medications have some downsides as well as benefits.
6. Medications can be changed at every med review, so I will make sure I update my list after every med review.

I will remind myself that medications can be very helpful, but they must be closely monitored.

Coffee with a CASA

We hosted our first Coffee with a CASA event on April 30 at the Philadelphia Baking Company in Sierra Vista. I am very pleased with the results! The intent of this event was to reach out to the community and invite people to enjoy coffee and a pastry while learning about the CASA Program. Ned Letto took the initiative to contact the Sierra Vista Herald and get an article published inviting the public for coffee. We also used Facebook and printed flyers posted throughout the community to spread the word.

Mary Blanchard, Chris Charles-Hall, Tracy Diaz, Ned Letto, Darcy Markee, and Lynn Vanderdasson all attended the event and spoke with potential applicants. Without them, this would not have been as successful! Thank you all for coming out and supporting the event.

We had five people come to learn about the CASA Program. This may not seem like a huge number, but each of these people spent over an hour of their time with us. They all

had the opportunity to speak with a current CASA and witness their passion and commitment to the children of our community. Each of the potential applicants seemed very interested in the opportunity and left with an application packet. In addition, at least one of the potential applicants had people in mind that they would be sharing our information with as well.

Again, none of this would have been possible without the support of all of you. I know there were some of you that wanted to attend but could not, due to scheduling conflicts. I also know that some of you promoted the event using social media and word-of-mouth, which was also very important.

Thank you all, and great job!





From the Manual

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COURT: SOME CONSIDERATIONS for CASA/GAL VOLUNTEERS

Recommendations to the court in the child's best interest are the culmination of the court report and the final result of the CASA/GAL volunteer's work. The judge is the decision maker who will or will not order the CASA/GAL volunteer's recommendations. Clearly, recommendations should be written to be powerful and effective.

Recommendations Should Be Child-Focused

Child-focused recommendations tell not only *what* we want to have the judge order but also *why* we want it in terms of the child's needs and best interests.

NOT CHILD-FOCUSED	CHILD-FOCUSED
Mother must have substance abuse evaluation, follow recommendations from same and remain drug-free for 6 month before court will consider reunification.	Jamilla deserves the safety of living with a parent who isn't abusing drugs. Mother must have substance abuse evaluation, follow recommendations from same and remain drug-free for 6 month before court will consider reunification.
Parents must attend parenting class and demonstrate that they have learned effective parenting skills.	Marcus should not be physically hurt by his parents in the name of discipline. Parents must attend parenting class and demonstrate that they have learned effective parenting skills.
Father must obtain housing appropriate for his family and stay in the same place for at least 6 months for the court to consider his housing to be stable.	Susan needs stability. Father must obtain housing appropriate for his family and stay in the same place for at least 6 months for the court to consider his housing to be stable.

- What difference does it make if recommendations are child-focused?
- Are the child-focused recommendations superior? Why or why not?

Some further examples of child-focused recommendations:

- [Child's name] needs a therapeutic foster home near a specialized outpatient treatment facility, as stated in the attached evaluation by [Psychologist]. DCS must arrange such a placement as soon as possible.
- [Child] and her mother should continue to have bi-weekly visitation, supervised by CPS, provided that such visitation continues to be supported by [child's] therapist.
- [Child] deserves to know who her parents are and to be supported financially. [Alleged biological father's] paternity shall be tested. If paternity is confirmed, he shall pay child support.

Recommendations Should Include Outcome Measures

Outcome measures add specific parameters that define a successful execution of the recommendation. They clarify the expected outcome and set observable goals.

NO OUTCOME MEASURES	OUTCOME MEASURES INCLUDED
Jamilla deserves the safety of living with a parent who isn't abusing drugs. Mother must have substance abuse evaluation and follow recommendations from same.	Jamilla deserves the safety of living with a parent who isn't abusing drugs. Mother must have substance abuse evaluation, follow recommendations from same, and remain drug-free for 6 month before court will consider reunification.
Marcus should not be physically hurt by his parents in the name of discipline. Parents must attend parenting classes.	Marcus should not be physically hurt by his parents in the name of discipline. Parents must attend parenting class and demonstrate that they have learned effective parenting skills.
Susan needs stability. Father must have stable housing.	Susan needs stability. Father must obtain housing sufficient for his family and stay in the same place for at least 6 months before the court considers his housing stable.

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From the Manual (Continued)

- How will we know if the court-ordered recommendations in the “no outcome measures” column have been met?
- If those recommendations are met, will the children’s needs necessarily also have been met?
- In which case are we more assured that the children’s needs will be met?

Recommendations Should Cover All the Child's Needs

Perhaps it seems obvious to say that the recommendations should cover the child’s needs, but...

- What if the child has a need that has not been met over multiple hearings? Do you still ask for it?
- What if the child has a need that the county doesn’t provide services for? Do you still ask for it?
- If the child’s needs are great in one area, for instance mental health, should his educational needs still be listed, even though he can’t address them at this time?
- If the child is placed with extended family members who can’t meet some of her needs, do you still press for all needs to be met even though it may cause the child to be moved?

Recommendations Should Not Set Parents Up for Failure

One of the central dilemmas for CASA/GAL volunteers is the fact that children do best when they live with their parents or other family members who can provide a minimum sufficient level of care, yet these adults may seem very marginal to us. Parents and caregivers in our cases are usually struggling or limited in significant ways. CASA/GAL volunteers must advocate for the child’s safety and at the same time, keep in mind that the

only standard a family should have to meet is the minimum sufficient level of care.

Poverty in and of itself should not be a factor when deciding if a family will be allowed to raise its own children. However, it is easy to set the parents or guardians up for failure if we make cost-associated recommendations that they cannot afford. Additionally, a long laundry list of court orders can be so discouraging that a parent who could in fact succeed may give up. If that occurs, have we served our child-client’s best interests?

- What other ways might we set a parent up for failure?
- How have we fallen short in our advocacy for the child’s best interest if we do set the parent up for failure? (Who else is failing here?)

All Recommendations Should Be Supported in the Body of Report

Imagine you are the judge reading a CASA/GAL volunteer court report and you come across the following recommendations. In each case, the issue addressed by the recommendation was not mentioned in the body of the report. What would you think?

“Kerri should have therapy to help her with her self-injurious behaviors.”

“Father will continue counseling until released by therapist.”

“Joseph will be evaluated by a licensed speech therapist”

~Continued on next page

From the Manual (Continued)

- Why is it important to support each recommendation in the report body?
- How does writing a recommendation to address an issue not discussed in the report put that recommendation at risk?
- If the case is appealed and all reports in the file are read again, what are the implications for court reports that don't support their own recommendations?

Example Recommendations:

1. Counseling (individual or family)
2. Current custody of child or physical placement
3. Visitation (supervised or unsupervised, length of time)
4. Drug screening and or substance abuse treatment
5. Parenting classes, domestic violence classes or anger management classes
6. Psychological testing
7. School testing for learning disabilities or hyperactivity
8. Programs offered by state or county or school system
9. Community youth programs such as Big Brother, Big Sister
10. CASA/GAL volunteer's continued advocacy for youth



Cochise County Council for CASA

is a nonprofit organization that raises funds to the unmet needs of abused neglected and abandoned children in the CASA of Cochise County Program. The primary focus is to ensure that educational progress of CASA children through tutoring and scholarships. In addition the council provides clothing, toys and personal items.

If your CASA child/youth has an unmet need, consider the Cochise County Council for CASA to help!!

Call your CASA Coordinator at 432-7521 **OR**
Send an email to Adodge@courts.az.gov



Around the World in 94 Days - Part 1

by LuRue Troyer, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

Tanzania

My granddaughter Montana and I had already taken three foreign trips together and learned that we are good travel buddies, so when she asked if I would consider a 3-month trip as part of her Gap Year between high school and college, I was ready to pack my bags. I did set a condition, though. Our other trips had been for Spanish immersion and for snorkeling, but this one, I said, needed to be focused on volunteering in some way...especially given the length of time we would be gone. Montana is an adventurer, so did not hesitate to agree.

Between 1997 and 2001, I had been on 11 trips with Global Volunteers, 6 of those as a volunteer team leader. I admire the philosophy, the message, and the resilience of the organization, so I didn't have to look far for a basis of such a long journey. Montana and I had already discussed wanting to go to Africa and to China. I suggested India as a third possibility as the culture is so unique. Montana agreed. I had previously been to all three places and felt that they would appeal to my granddaughter as well. Fortunately, I

was right!

We began planning more than a year in advance. The first step was to wait until Global Volunteers published their 2015 schedules. With the help of the main office in St. Paul, MN, we were able to plan three service programs back-to-back, giving us a skeleton outline. We would begin with Tanzania (three weeks), move on to India (four weeks), and then finish in China (three weeks). About half of all Global Volunteer service programs are teaching conversational English, and so it was with the ones we chose.

A lot happened during the year before the trip actually began...personal events that nearly cancelled everything...but in the end we just barely had time to apply for travel visas and make necessary arrangements. Montana flew south from her home in Fairbanks just after Christmas. We left Tucson on January 2nd, flying east to Dallas to Doha, Qatar to Kilimanjaro.

January was our Tanzania month, beginning with a 4-day wildlife safari with a terrific guide. We had three nights of tent-camping, one of which included a



herd of cape buffaloes passing within 15 or 20 feet of our tent, our flashlights revealing bright eyes looking in our direction. It was magical to see all the wild African animals so up-close-and-personal from our jeep.



In Dar es Salaam we met up with our Global Volunteers team (four others). After a night in a hotel, we left on the 13-hour overland journey for another overnight in Iringa town, located in the heart of the country. After picking up supplies, it was another three hours of driving before we arrived in Pommern, a very rural village where Global Volunteers has been operating since 1986.

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Around the World in 94 Days - Part 1 (Continued)



We stayed in a large renovated Lutheran Mission House with Mama Tony cooking our meals. Montana and I opted for African-style showers (pouring water over one's head) with water heated by Mama Tony while the others used the cold-water shower stalls. The generator provided 3.5 hours of electricity every evening, which meant that we could keep our electronics charged. There was no Internet available, however, so our travel blog had to "go dark" for three weeks, but we were amazed at how many people had cell phones (we didn't have those) with good coverage.



Montana and I had a variety of teaching assignments, ready to serve however they needed us. Our first week was

spent at the boarding school—Standards 1 to 6, equivalent to our middle and high schools. We developed lesson plans according to need. Since we were working with students in Standard 1 who had learned only a little English through reading and writing...not speaking...our challenge was to overcome their shyness. One of the things that we came up with was distinguishing between the sounds of **L** and **R**. We would say, "I have lice (or rice). What should I do?" to which they would reply either, "You should eat it" or "You should wash your head." We developed other similar questions and answers, which eventually got everyone laughing, especially when we turned the tables and had *them* ask *us* the questions.



During the afternoons, we met with the students at the secondary school for informal activities, such as playing Uno. Since all students have their heads shaved, we had to peek to see whether they were wearing skirts or trousers.

Our second week was with the "kindergarten" which turned out to be pre-school—ages 3 and 4. The



"teacher" could speak no English and was, in fact, a local volunteer herself. She showed up every day to work with these children in learning the English alphabet, numbers, colors, etc. Montana and I learned to have enormous respect for those who are with this age group day after day. The kids have the attention span of a hummingbird's wingbeat and energy that doesn't have



an "Off" button. We did learn that it is possible to hold hands with at least six children at once as they raced up the trail to greet us each day, fighting over who got to hold our hands.

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Around the World in 94 Days - Part 1 (Continued)

The third and final week we were back at the secondary school, this time working with Standards 3 and 4. We



were asked to teach "How to Write a Story". Fortunately Montana had learned a formula and graph that we were able to use. We began with a story that we made up, writing the example on the chalkboard. Then we asked the class (of about 12 students each time) to do a group story. The lesson ended with each student writing a personal story and reading it aloud to the class.

Overcoming shyness was the most difficult hurdle as the culture does not encourage self-promotion at all. Even making eye contact is difficult for them, especially with Westerners, whom they seldom see.

Outside of classes, however, the students could not have been more friendly. They were especially drawn to Montana as she was their age and they were eager to know her interests in music, dance, and other things that attract teenagers. She had to admit feeling flattered when she would hear

her name being called out from 200 yards away.

During our free time we were preparing for the next lessons, walking through the village, buying a soda at a small shop, going to one of the tailor shops to have



Tailor making local design skirt for one of our volunteers, using treadle machine



Iron heated by live coals

local dresses made, going to church, hanging out at the school activity field, or going on a hike with some local students. In spite of the very rural nature of the area, we were taken by the similarities of interests, of family relationships, and of hopes and dreams of those we met. Though they certainly have their problems as we all do, we are much more the same than different. We were welcomed with warm, loving, open arms.

Montana and I hold Tanzania and its people in a special place in our hearts.



Pommern, Tanzania



The following link is a 3-minute video made by Montana of our time in Tanzania. The background music was recorded at a Lutheran church service we attended. In Tanzania the Lutheran Diocese is the host for Global Volunteers.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ts3GDAZ5fU

Part 2 of the trip...India...will appear in a future issue of the newsletter.